

COMMON GROUND



MARCH—APRIL, 1951

VOLUME V—NUMBER 2

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KINGSWAY CHAMBERS, 162A, STRAND, LONDON, W.C.2

Telephone : TEMPLE BAR 9306-7-8

Cover Photograph: Spring in the Vale of Rydal.

(Photo: Fox.)

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Christian and Jew—together today

HENRY CARTER

A Freechurchman's testimony, by the Executive Chairman of the Council of Christians and Jews.

AS one who has been associated from the beginning with the Council of Christians and Jews, I recently put to myself a question, the answer to which might be of interest to others. How comes it, I asked myself, that one cradled in the Christian tradition finds himself today associated consistently and constantly with members of the Jewish community, not only in acts of civic service but in the attempt to uphold with them the moral and spiritual values which are the true foundation of human life? I am venturing to give the answer in personal terms, and by reference to three stages in personal experience.

Youth

Looking back over my early years spent in the West of England and South Wales, I recognise that my boyhood was not free from prejudices, inherited or acquired; yet it was singularly free from prejudice against Jewry. Foxe's *Book of Martyrs* was a book to which we were taught to turn; it gave me a bias against authoritarian ecclesiastical policy. Politically, my father was a Radical of Radicals, and hostility to Toryism was doubtless vocal in family table-talk day by day. Yet in a home where strong convictions were held and expressed, I cannot recall that any slighting word was spoken of a Jew. In Church life—my parents were earnest Methodists—the Hebrew scriptures were presented in a way fascinating to a boy. Their stories became an interpretation of life.

Later, in the early twenties, when the sense of vocation to the Christian ministry came upon me, it brought a deepening sense of the wideness of the love of God which left no deposit of antagonism towards any person. Indeed, life's earlier prejudices became impersonal and

therefore less divisive, as one came to see God as the Universal Father whose human family is destined to become one brotherhood throughout the world.

Theological training

The next stage in this personal review was the three-years' theological course at Handsworth College, followed by four years' directed study in preparation for the ministry of the Methodist Church. At no point in the period of directed reading and tutorial guidance was a bias created in our thoughts against Jewry. Indeed, as we learned to read the Hebrew Scriptures in the original they spoke to us with a more profound and searching meaning, to which the mind of a thoughtful Christian made ready response. The Psalms—apart from those imprecatory in language and meaning—became more and more a medium of personal devotion. The Prophets spoke to us of a view of human life in which social justice must be supreme. It was this exalted view of Hebrew Scripture which we learned to carry forward to the interpretation of the Christian New Testament.

It is important to add that at no point in my College course do I recall that the Crucifixion of Jesus of Nazareth was attributed to the Jewish community as a whole; certainly there was no impartation of bias against the Jews as an historical community.

So also in our reading of Christian Church history: there was no prejudice against the Jew as a Jew. Contrariwise, the lesson of Church history was that the Christian attitude to Jewry ought to reflect penitential feeling for dark years and deeds, when men who unworthily bore the name of Christian turned on Jewry with despising and persecution. Nor was this exceptional. The training of Free Churchmen for the ministerial vocation would, generally speaking, conform to this experience.

Pastoral service

College days over, I entered the pastoral work of the ministry of the Methodist Church. I know that at the time I was particularly aware of the richness of the spiritual and social teaching of the Hebrew Scriptures, and it would be accurate to assume that one's interpretation of religion to the communities I was called upon to serve—first Bristol, then in Harrow, then in Birmingham—bore that mark. I was deeply concerned to state and apply religious principles to social and public life, and the treasure store of Hebraic religion was an unfailing source of instruction.

But here I must add a significant comment. In the three centres of population which I have just named, I do not recall that at any time in a period of ten years was I brought into personal touch with the local Jewish community or its Rabbi. The community of the Synagogue went its way;



*The author
with refugee
children
brought to
this country
shortly before
the outbreak
of war.*

the Christian Churches went their way. There was an unconscious *apartheid*. It was not that we resolutely stood apart, but that Synagogue and Church had not learned to confer, still less to co-operate.

And yet today I and colleagues who are Christian ministers of other communions share with Jewish Rabbis in fellowship and service through the Council of Christians and Jews. Somehow we have passed from *apartheid* to what South Africans now call *eendrag*, that is, the will to pull together. How has the change come to pass ? For me and many others of my generation the answer centres in one hateful word—Hitler.

I may be allowed to recall the incident which brought the issue to focus in my mind. The flight of Jewish refugees from Germany from

1933 onwards stirred in one a sense of eager sympathy, and what it lay within my power to do as a Christian minister to alleviate the lot of individual refugees was eagerly done. In 1937 I was in Yugo-Slavia travelling with my old friend, the veteran Labour leader, George Lansbury. One evening, we reached a little lake-side town called Bled. The interpreter who had accompanied us asked permission to leave our party to see his mother who lived in the town. When he returned I saw at a glance that he was in trouble. In answer, he explained that his mother was receiving treatment for cancer from a specialist, but that the hopeful treatment must end, for the doctor who treated her had just received a confidential warning from another patient that he must "escape" that night.

"Escape?" I asked, thinking I had misheard him. Then he explained. The doctor was a Jew. Because of his skill he had been the head of a Cancer Research Institution near Berlin. Because he was a Jew he had been forced into a concentration camp. A grateful patient had contrived his escape to Austria, where he set up in practice again. Then came the Hitler *putsch* into Austria, and for a second time he sought safety in flight, coming to Yugo-Slavia. Now he had learned that the Gestapo had crossed the frontier and he must escape straightaway. In a flash, the meaning of the Hitler persecution of Jews stood revealed in its stark horror.

You may know that for ten years I have given nearly all my time to refugee work; it was that incident at Bled which illumined for me not only Hitler's brutality but the meaning of earlier and no less black pages of European history. That evening in Yugo-Slavia had a vocational significance for me, which holds good to this hour.

Together today

So we stand together today, Christian and Jew. Probably many of my fellow-Christians have found their way into this fellowship of thought and service by different roads. I think, however, that it can be said with justice to fact that for many Christians it was the shameful Hitler policy which brought about the ending of the period of segregation to which I have referred. Human suffering drew Christian and Jews together, and as we came together the teachings of the Divine revelations which both our communities revere enabled us to tread with confidence the common ground on which we now meet.

I well recall that when in 1941 a joint group met under the Chairmanship of the late Archbishop Temple to consider plans for the formation of a Council of Christians and Jews, he expressed this in clear terms. "This Conference," said William Temple, "has been called today to deal with the problem of antisemitism, but not as an isolated issue, rather as a

symptom of an evil which threatens all mankind. If the Conference is to be effective, it must do more than depose antisemitism; it must concern itself with the establishment of such co-operation between Jew and Christian for the full understanding and co-operation of people who have shared together, and have their roots in, the Hebrew Scriptures. And then they should be able to deal more effectively with the disease of which antisemitism is merely one of the symptoms."

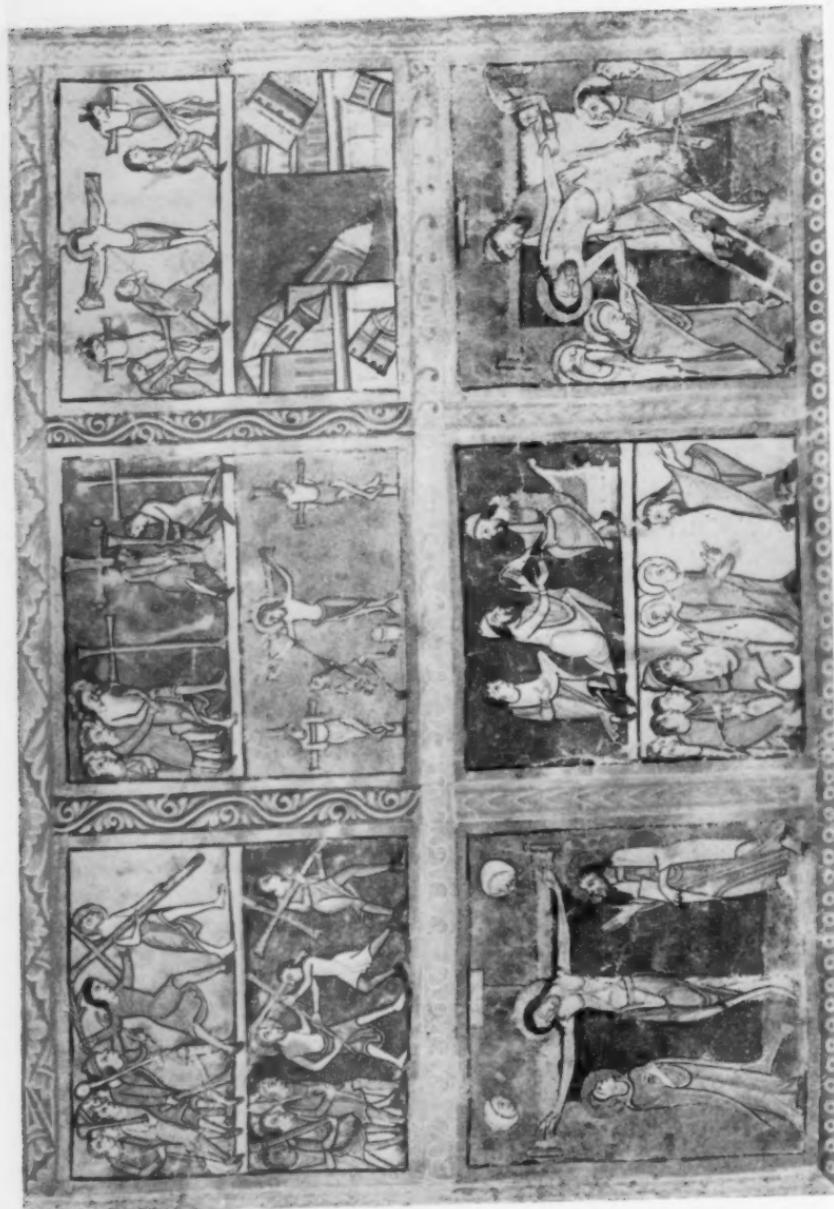
For many thousands of Christian thinkers in our country the days of isolation from Jewry have passed or are passing. Throughout Britain, wherever Jewish and Christian communities exist side by side, there should be a deep searching for the common religious principles which both communities affirm and uphold. In this darkening world our common witness of religious values is essential. Together we should testify to the sovereignty of one God—Creator, Father, Redeemer—and to one brotherhood of man that should know no boundary of status, race or creed. The menaced world in which we live and work needs this transforming message beyond any other.

The Christian Easter

A. G. HEBERT, S.S.M.

IT is clear from the New Testament that the Christians kept the Paschal Festival from the very beginning. Jesus was crucified at Passover time, almost certainly on the day before the festival; the Church, confessing that through suffering and death he had entered into his glory (Luke xxiv, 25-7), according to the prophetic type of the Suffering Servant, kept the Passover as the festival of his resurrection. Some kept it on Nisan 14; but the usage which prevailed, and which we still follow, was to keep it on the Sunday following the full moon. For there was not only the annual commemoration of his resurrection, but also the weekly commemoration of it; the phrase "the first day of the week" occurs in the New Testament only with reference to the weekly assembly of the Church (Acts xx, 7, I Cor. xvi, 2), and at the commencement of the resurrection narrative in each of the four gospels.

Easter is the annual commemoration; and it has always been the greatest Christian festival, with Pentecost ranking next to it. The Anglican Book of Common Prayer is in line with the general liturgical tradition of Christendom in interpreting the Christian feast by its Old Testament types, as the New Testament does; the chief of these are the deliverance of Israel from Egypt in the Exodus, and the Paschal sacrifice. We read lessons from Exodus xii-xv, we sing Psalm 114, "When Israel came out of Egypt;" there are phrases such as that of the Preface, "For he is the very



Paschal Lamb, which was offered for us, and hath taken away the sin of the world," and hymns like

*The Lamb's high banquet we await
In snow-white robes of royal state;
And now, the Red Sea's channel past,
To Christ, our Prince, we sing at last.*

*That Paschal eve God's arm was bared;
The devastating angel spared;
By strength of hand our hosts went free
From Pharaoh's ruthless tyranny.*

(English Hymnal 125 : from the Latin).

The fulfilment of prophecy

But a word needs to be said about the notion of the fulfilment of types and prophecies, in the New Testament and the Church. The "fundamentalist" view, which assumed that prophecy was history written beforehand, so that Jesus would be proved to be the Son of God by the correspondence of details in his life, death and resurrection with texts from the Old Testament, is not really true of the New Testament writers; for if not always, at least usually, they have a sense that the fulfilment was greater than, and went beyond, the prophecy. The prophets were human servants of God, "seeking to discern what person of what time the Spirit of the Messiah which was in them was pointing to, when it spoke beforehand of the sufferings of the Messiah and the Glory that should follow" (I Peter i, 11); but the Fulfiller was God himself come to save. "God, who in many fragments and in many ways spoke to the fathers by the prophets, has at the end of those days spoken to us by his Son" (Hebrews i, 1—in both these quotations I am translating literally from the Greek).

The principle of fulfilment, as they believed and as we believe, is that there was a purpose of God, which found incomplete and preparatory expression in the Old Testament, but was declared in its fulness in his Son who was made man. Thus, when in Acts ii, 25-32 Peter quotes Ps. 16, "Thou shalt not leave my soul in (to) She'ol" he is not really proving the resurrection of Jesus from the psalm; what he is saying is rather that the

Picture Opposite : DETAIL FROM A LEAF OF AN ENGLISH TWELFTH CENTURY PSALTER OR GOSPEL-BOOK.

(By permission of the Victoria & Albert Museum)

psalmist knew God to be the giver of life, and this truth found its full and complete expression when Jesus died and God raised him from death victorious.

The Christian fulfilment

In such texts as Jer. xxiii, 7-8, Isa. xl, 1-11, xliii, 15-21, the future divine deliverance to which these prophets look forward is described as a Second Exodus: the Lord who long ago delivered their fathers from bondage to Pharaoh and led them through the wilderness, would likewise deliver them from exile in Babylon. In the New Testament the work of Jesus is seen as such a Second Exodus, in which Jesus himself is the Paschal Lamb (I Cor. v, 7, x, 1-4); but this deliverance is not from political oppression, but from that of the last enemy of man, sin, the devil, and death. Thus the fulfilment of the prophecy is on a higher level than the prophecy. The great biblical theme of deliverance from the enemy found only imperfect expression when Israel was saved from temporal slavery. It was fully revealed only through the work of Jesus; for the real freedom is the inner freedom of man, liberated from bondage to his lusts and to his pride to serve God according to the Spirit.

Easter and baptism

Hence in the early Church Easter was the great occasion for baptism; this rite was performed in the course of the all night service, and culminated in the Easter Eucharist. As Jesus died and rose again, so the converts from paganism died to their heathen past, and were raised again with Jesus to new life in the power of his resurrection (cf. Romans vi, 3-11). The texts of the ancient all night service are still used in the Easter Eve service in the Roman Missal, where the *praecomicium* at the Blessing of the Paschal candle develops at length the theme of the Exodus, and the twelve Prophecies which follow resume the story of the mighty works of God: the creation, Noah's Ark, the sacrifice of Isaac, the passage of the Red Sea: then come four prophecies, and then the institution of the Passover, Jonah at Nineveh, Moses viewing the Promised Land, the Three in the Burning Fiery Furnace. It is not possible to discuss these types here. But it is necessary to mention the texts read on Good Friday, of which the chief are the prophecies of the Suffering Servant, above all Isaiah liii, and the corresponding psalms, especially 22 and 69; for in these the note of Easter is heard, since the Servant of the Lord is depicted as passing through suffering and martyrdom to final victory, in which "he shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied."

We Christians are learning more and more in these days to take the Old Testament seriously, as the Book of the People of God; and Christians

and Jews need to meet and explain to one another how they read this Book which they reverence in common. We must do this, even though Easter is the point at which our difference is sharpest. Without Jesus Christ the Old Testament would be to us a ragged end, containing glorious hopes and promises which apart from him have never been fulfilled.

A Prayer for the Passover evenings

RABBI DR. IGNAZ MAYBAUM

THE Haggadah is a little booklet consisting of biblical passages, extracts from popular sermons, psalms, and hymns. Its purpose is to give the ordinary Jewish householder some help to tell his wife, his children, and his guests, the story of the departure from Egypt. Before and after the meal on the first two nights of Passover the story of the intervention of God in history is told in the Jewish home. Among the simple hymns of the Haggadah there is one sung by all around the table: " May God soon rebuild his house; speedily soon, in our days." The tune is still usually that of a medieval German folk-song which fits well to the continuous repetition of the word SOON around which the whole hymn twines.

For years already, when I come to sing this song at my family table, the gentle face of a Christian friend is before my eyes. I never met this friend; he died when I was three years old. But I call this man my friend; he certainly was a sincere friend of the Jewish people. I am referring to Vladimir Solovyev. He died, worn out by his work as a theological writer, in 1900. This great man spent all his energies as a thinker for the unification of mankind through Judaeo-Christian ideas. When he felt his end drawing nigh, he retired to a friend's estate near Moscow, received Extreme Unction from a priest of the Orthodox Church and employed the last hours of his life in prayer for the Jews.

Jewish religious realism

Solovyev aimed at a universalism which would bring harmony between East and West. Western humanism is in danger of creating man without God; Eastern absolutism—God is everything and man "only dust and ashes" (*Genesis xviii, 27*)—is in danger of aspiring towards an inhuman God. It was at this point that Solovyev referred to what he called Jewish religious realism. This realism does not ignore man, it is not anti-humanist; Judaism, expressed in doctrines, is always a kind of humanism. Jewish religious realism sees man from the start not in the abstract way of Western philosophy, but as created in the image of God.

The thesis "man is of divine race" led Solovyev to an appreciation of the Jewish benediction "Blessed art Thou, O Lord . . . who hast planted eternal life into our midst" which he had learned from the Rabbis with whom he studied rabbinical literature.

It was Solovyev's conviction, expressed in all his literary work, that the complete universal regeneration of mankind requires not only the combined efforts of all branches of Christianity, but also the participation of Judaism. He saw the contribution which the Jewish people have to give to mankind in Jewish messianic faith. In his "A Short Story of Antichrist" (*A Solovyev Anthology*, edited by S. L. Frank, S.C.M. Press Ltd.) he honours the Jewish people to play a decisive role in defeating the Antichrist.

Solovyev's "Short Story of Antichrist" is in fact an answer to Dostoevsky's famous "The Great Inquisition." Dostoevsky is the greater poet, but Solovyev is the great theologian with a clarity of vision about the implication of the churches, the Eastern, the Roman and the Protestant church in history, unattained by Dostoevsky. The "Short Story" shows the three Churches in the grip of the Antichrist. The Antichrist is sketched as a "convinced idealist." "He believed in God, but at the bottom of his heart unconsciously and instinctively, preferred himself to Him." Solovyev's Antichrist is a man who performed great works, but he did so in his own name, not in the name of God.

The victory of the Antichrist, writes Solovyev, seemed completed, "but at this point he was faced with new trouble from an *utterly unexpected quarter* (the italics are mine); the Jews rose up against him." The Jews had a share in preparing and assisting the superman's worldwide success. But eventually they could not be deceived. In the process of the messianic history they were aware when the historic event ceased to be of messianic relevance. "The Jews set out to meet the Antichrist with *small hope of success*" (again the italics are mine); but the "Short Story" ends with a miraculous Jewish victory over the Antichrist, a kind of repetition of the Passover miracle at the Red Sea.

Solovyev concludes with a tribute to the Jews: "The whole of Jewry rose up like one man, and its enemies saw with surprise that in its real depth the soul of the Jew lived not by calculation and greed for gain, but by the power of heartfelt emotion—by the hope and wrath of its centuries-old messianic faith." This messianic faith is expressed in the simple hymn for the Passover night "that God may soon rebuild His house, speedily, soon, in our days." Solovyev quotes the whole hymn with its many verses in his theological treatise about the Jews. But the fervent messianic faith of the Jew is brought home with sufficient force when we refer to the one word, repeated again and again in the hymn: SOON.



A HAGGADAH MS, written by Abraham the Scribe of El-ingen, 1650
(By permission of the Jewish Museum)

Tolerance—a broadcast discussion

On January 26th 1951 the Welsh Regional Home Service of the B.B.C. broadcast a discussion on "Tolerance." Under the Chairmanship of Mr. David Prosser, Editor of the "Western Mail," the participants were the Dean of Llandaff (the Very Rev. Glynn Simon, Anglican), Rev. Oswald Davies (Congregational Minister), Mr. A. C. F. Beales (Roman Catholic), and Mr. A. I. Polack (Jewish). The extracts below contain the main points from the discussion. The Chairman, in his summing up of the discussion, emphasised the common ground between all four participants.

REV. OSWALD DAVIES



for human personality which the New Testament calls love.

Non-conformity has always stood for the rights and the corresponding duties of respect for personal opinion. It has rejected the unqualified claims of external authority—religious and political—in matters of conscience.

What then are we to say of authority? Does freedom of opinion imply the rejection of all authority? Does it mean anarchy? By no means. As non-conformists we are not committed to the denial of authority. What we do say is that the acceptance of authority is as much an act of criticism of that authority as is its rejection. In other words the acceptance of authority is itself an assertion of the right of individual judgment, whether the authority be the tradition of the Church, the creeds or the Bible; what gives it its power is its appeal to the hearts and minds of men. It is not so much what men believe as how they believe that makes for tolerance or intolerance. And to quote St. Paul, that great Jew, who was also a Christian and an Apostle to all the nations:

"We too must learn to suffer one another in Love." In that realm, in the realm of personal relationships, fellowship and toleration are the marks of the good life.

We can never hope for uniformity of belief, but an identity of moral purpose in making possible the larger freedom of the human spirit is well within our reach. That purpose, of course, is the creation of conditions in the wider world which are favourable to the growth of those open personal relationships found at their best in the small intimate group.

A. C. F. BEALES



I AM told that tolerance in England today is due to indifference; that when you no longer care much what your neighbour believes about God and man, you do not persecute him, you don't bother to. But that is not tolerance. Tolerance means not persecuting him when you do want to, when you do feel strongly that he is wrong and that his beliefs contradict all you hold dear, and ought not to be spread, and you do want to ban him or lock him up accordingly. The virtue of tolerance lies in resisting that.

The Roman Catholic Church teaches that we have to make a distinction here, just as one does in saying, "Hate the sin, but love the sinner." I must not tolerate the error, the false idea, the denial of God's truth, for if I do that I am insulting truth. But I may tolerate the person in error. I must not, as a Christian, tolerate the idea that man exists for the State, for that is a denial of the God-given dignity of the human process. But we Christians are tolerating and co-operating with plenty of people who are preaching that doctrine.

I, as a Roman Catholic, do not tolerate the idea that one religion is as true as another, or that it does not much matter what you believe, so long as you are sincere. Society itself does not tolerate ignorance as a principle, but it does not persecute the illiterate. It educates them. The Church teaches, whatever certain Christians of all kinds have done about it at certain periods, that conversion by force is not only wrong, it is impossible. It cannot be done. The Church also teaches, and this is no less fundamental, that a man's ultimate guide is his conscience, even when his

conscience tells him that it is his *duty* to do something he ^{has} no *right* to do.

That is a curious thing—that a man may really feel it is his duty to do something that is wrong.

Tolerance means two things simultaneously—it means believing in your own creed as finally good and absolutely true, with at the same time a genuine abstention from attempting to enforce it. If you think that a Protestant or a Catholic or a Jew or a Nazi or a Marxist will himself abide by that rule, that he will refrain from trying to impose on you by force the belief he says he holds so dear, and that he will try to win your free conversion by the force of his own teaching and his own good example, then I think there is no difficulty. But if you think that he will only shelter beneath that rule in order to break it, that he will get to power by democratic means and then use the power to abolish democratic means, that he will exploit toleration in order to destroy toleration, then you may well say that he has forfeited his right to claim toleration from you. But that still leaves the other question: would that entitle you to refuse him toleration? The answer to that will be in actual fact that you will persecute him in direct proportion to how dangerous you think he will be to your inmost ideals.

And then one final point: tolerance is only half the picture—the negative half. The positive half is the question of religious freedom, *full* religious freedom in the modern State, and the minimum conditions necessary for it.

A. I. POLACK



I AM a member of the Jewish community and my approach to the subject of religious tolerance must of necessity be affected by Jewish teachings. But it is not entirely a question of dogma or teaching where Jews are concerned.

What do we mean by tolerance? As far as I am aware the word denotes an attitude of mind towards those with whom we are in total or partial disagreement. It is the ability to display forbearance towards a different doctrine or creed or way of life, the resolve to permit

such different doctrines, creeds, ways of life to exist and to give them a free and unfettered right to express themselves; with this proviso, that by so doing they do not impinge upon the rights or freedoms of others. If this definition is correct, then Judaism has a clear approach to the subject.

We have our own specific code of religious law and certain rules and regulations which govern our way of life. We have distinctive forms of worship, though some of them are closely akin to those of other denominations. In our social behaviour and our ordinary relations with our fellow men we follow the pattern of the majority of the civilised people in whose country we live. But our different history and distinctive religious tradition do, it seems to me, qualify us to make a special approach to the problem of human relations.

We urge that provided others believe in the brotherhood of man, a doctrine that derives from the concept of the Fatherhood of God, first taught in the Old Testament, then they together with us form complete membership of the family of peoples. Our teachings can best be summed up in the famous rabbinic saying, "The pious ones of all peoples have their place in the world hereafter." Now this does not mean that tolerance is based on indifference, or that it does not matter what a man believes. It is, in fact, an active assertion of modesty, of humility before the majestic mystery of divine truth. Aspects of that truth have been handed down and revealed to many groups of men, but in the long run it is not what a man has been taught to believe so much as how a man acts in fellowship with his neighbour, that finally receives justification or recognition.

If we now consider the historical aspect and try to put it into perspective it will readily be seen why at times we feel a sense of hopelessness, of frustration, because of the intolerance which has been displayed between denominations. All the great faiths preach the same basic ethical principles, all strive towards the same goal, all believe in the Fatherhood of God. Why then should the roads on which we travel cause us to diverge to such an extent that we have decried and denounced each other with such bitter invective?

We see only one solution to the problem—that each learn more of the teaching of the other without fear that such new knowledge may affect his own loyalties to his own doctrine. With greater knowledge of each other we may learn greater respect and not be affected too deeply by divergencies. We may agree to differ without loss of the friendly spirit.



THE DEAN OF LLANDAFF,
THE VERY REV. GLYN SIMON

THE idea of tolerance is implicit in Christianity from the first, and it did actually work out pretty well at the beginning in the refusal of the earliest Christians to resort to violence at all. No doubt they would have found resort to violence very difficult to make successful, but that does not alter the fact that violence seemed to them contrary to the spirit of Christianity.

The real difficulty is surely that tolerance becomes very hard in matters over which you feel very

strongly, or where you are convinced that vital issues are at stake. And so outbursts of intolerance as a matter of history mark off periods of strong religious feeling. For example, the formative periods of the early Church with heresies and counter-heresies and the huntings of both parties; or again the Reformation and the counter-Reformation with all that came from that. I sometimes wonder whether the will to tolerance could be strengthened if intolerant people could be allowed to see the crops that their posterity will reap.

What about Christianity and other religions? The relation between the Jew and the Christian is a special case. The records on both sides are far from what they ought to be.

Today we must surely admit that all sincerely held religious beliefs, however mistaken, are part of man's response to the call of God. This does not mean that we surrender for one moment the Christian claim of the uniqueness of the Divine Revelation in Christ. What we mean is that we are ready to acknowledge the achievements and contributions of other great religions.

The trouble really comes in when the teaching of some other religion looks like undermining your own. The challenge of communism raises the issue of tolerance with particular sharpness in our own day. It is a religious challenge, and the challenge of a view of life subversive of Christianity and all that it stands for. It is easy for us in this country without personal experience of its methods and its violence to advise

moderation. Yet it would be idle to deny that communism has its roots in social and racial injustices of long standing, and that the only final cure of it lies in the removal of the conditions on which it flourishes. We must not hand down to the future another Crusading legacy.

Perhaps as an Anglican I may be allowed to say that it seems to me that the Anglican Communion today is the scene of a great experiment in tolerance. Here you have a faith defined, in the creeds, the Prayer Book and the Scriptures, but with an enormous diversity of interpretation permitted. To many this tolerance seems subversive of any definite faith and full of dangers. Dangers there are, but they do not seem to me to be finally so great as those produced by repression and the imposition of an external uniformity, and they do not seem to me to be very different from those permitted by our Creator when he made his universe the scene of the activity of free men and women.

Sunday School Teaching and Prejudice

DERRICK CUTHBERT

This article deals with the charge that anti-Jewish prejudice may arise from careless teaching of the Christian story to young children in Sunday Schools. It was specially written for the "Sunday School Chronicle," and is reproduced by kind permission of the editor.

LYING in another country certainly gives one a different angle on things. Subjects that at home were only theoretically important have a trick of becoming live and pressing issues in a strange land. One of these is the question of race relations. I think I can claim that I always took an interest in this subject, and was always averagely "missionary-minded." But I don't think I ever saw it in its true light until I came to South Africa, where race relations are a matter of constant concern, in Parliament, in the newspapers, in the buses and trains, in the street and in the home. Race prejudice here is not something to talk about in a mild way; it is an evil that must be tackled, and one of the places where it must be tackled is the Sunday School, for, all unconsciously and without deliberate intent, the Sunday School can be one of the places where it breeds.

I have no intention of writing at length about the complicated situation in which we find ourselves here in South Africa, for that would be to deal with something that lies only on the fringe of the average British Sunday School teacher's interest and concern.

Our attitude to the Jews

I wish to raise the subject in its more general aspect, and also say something about one particular form of it which, to a greater or less degree, is found all over the world—I refer to our attitude to the Jews.

Generally, I wonder whether some of our Sunday School teaching encourages that attitude of mind which is sometimes called “thinking in stereotypes”? This consists of setting up a mental caricature to stand for certain classes of people. It is a way of thinking which is common to us all in our childhood. The pity of it is that some of us never grow out of it. In our childhood, when we are trying to distinguish between the different nationalities of mankind, we set up little mental pictures for ourselves, pictures which may be true so far as they go, but which are quite inadequate. The average schoolboy, for example, thinks of the French as “frog-eaters,” and if asked to say what else he knows about them has very little to add. Similarly, the Spaniards are bull-fighters; the Italians eat spaghetti and ride about in gondolas; Africans spend their time dancing to the sound of drums, and South Sea Islanders are reformed cannibals, and only just.

Mental caricatures

Such caricatures as these, however inadequate, are not likely to do much harm, for in general they contain little that could become a basis for moral judgments, little that could colour our dealings with people of these nationalities. The trouble is that a little later in life the caricatures come to possess a moral content, and yet they remain caricatures. “The Scots are mean.” “The Irish are fiery tempered.” “Germans are bullies by nature.” “Never trust a Jap.” Statements of this kind are bandied back and forth across domestic breakfast tables, in railway compartments and elsewhere and only rarely does anybody dare to challenge them.

When it comes to expressing our opinions of backward peoples—“natives” as we love to call them—the caricatures become far worse. I shall not soon forget the remark of a bus conductor who had hustled off the bus a native who was rather the worse for drink (supplied originally from some European bottle-store, no doubt, watered and then laced with methylated spirit—but that is another story). “They’re just like animals!” he said.

Now it seems to me that this lumping of people together, this branding of them all with the same mark of moral failure simply because of the colour of their skin, or because of their nationality, is largely responsible for the frightful divisions that exist today. Even when we do

not go as far as this, even when we do not condemn a man out of hand because of his race, we tend to approach him with suspicion; we hold him guilty until he has proved himself innocent. And of course, race relationships can never be what they ought to be if this is the line of approach. And, altogether apart from its social and political consequences, it is an offence against God.

Thoughtless teaching

But where does our Sunday School teaching come into all this ? Does not much of it encourage this kind of thinking ? What play we make with such terms as "priests," "Pharisees," "Levites." We attach such a stigma to these terms that to say that a man was a Priest, a Pharisee, or a Levite condemns him immediately, whatever his personal character.

It is perfectly true, of course, that the bulk of these people were bitterly opposed to Jesus, but much of our teaching does less than justice to the good qualities they possessed. Furthermore—and this is the point—in presenting them in this way we set an example of that "thinking in stereotypes" whose effects are so deplorable, and the children are quick to imitate. After all, it is very much easier for them to slip into the habit of counting all Pharisees (to take but one example) bad men through and through, than to attempt to discriminate among them.

Careless phraseology

My plea, therefore, in general is that we should be far less wholesale in our condemnations than we have been in the past, and that we should encourage the children, by our own example in teaching, as well as by definite instruction, to judge men as individuals; to judge them by the things they say and do, rather than by the party or race to which they belong. So many of our lessons present golden opportunities of leading our scholars to take up a constructive and sympathetic attitude to other people that it seems a great pity that loose thinking and careless phraseology on our part should be working in the opposite direction altogether.

Then, in particular, what of our attitude to the Jews ? I was disturbed to read in a Jewish magazine a few months ago that many Jews lay responsibility for the propagation of anti-Jewish feeling at the door of the Sunday School. The writer spoke of the way in which a little Jewish boy suddenly found himself shunned by his former playmates. The reason was that at Sunday School these children had been told that the Jews killed Jesus Christ, told in such a way that the Jewish race was made to

appear the only race guilty of so fiendish a deed. I do not for one moment believe that such teaching is representative of Sunday Schools today, however true it may have been some years ago. Nevertheless, I am uneasy.

Lessons with a bias

If we are careless in the way we present our lessons we may do something, if not to create, at any rate to strengthen, anti-Jewish feeling. Lessons which set Jesus on the one side and "the Jews" on the other, lumped together in the mass, good, bad and indifferent; lessons which forget that Jesus himself was born into the Jewish nation, and that the first disciples were Jews; lesson which dwell upon the manifest limitations of the Jewish religion in our Lord's day, without any recognition of the greatness of the spiritual heritage which had been preserved; lessons which stress the part played by the Jewish leaders in the condemnation of Christ, but soft-pedal the even more despicable part played by the Romans (for the Jews at least were partly motivated by what they believed was best for the nation, whereas Pilate was merely saving his own skin, and the brutal Roman soldiery were indulging their basest instincts); lesson-pictures which present a very English-looking Jesus, or apostles looking like Roman patricians, surrounded by hordes of obviously Jewish and equally obviously evil faces—all these things, slight though any one of them may be in its effect, do help to breed antisemitism.

If our presentation of the death of Christ consists of standing upon a pedestal and pointing the finger of accusation at another race we make it very difficult for our scholars to grasp the full meaning of the Atonement. Surely our aim should be to show how like ourselves those first century Jews were; how like our sin was their sin; so that gradually our scholars come to realise that what happened in history is but a setting forth in time and place of what our sin does to God and what God does about it. It is only as we realise *our* kinship with the men who hounded Jesus to his death that we can fully understand that he died for *us*.

Never was there greater need than today for the spreading abroad of that Christian love which is the only right basis for our dealings with one another. Never was there greater need for the casting out of prejudice; never greater need for us to approach people of races other than our own as those who were created by the same God and Father of us all, called, equally with ourselves, to live as his children. In the spreading abroad of this truth our Sunday Schools ought to be in the van. It would be a tragedy if mere carelessness were to mean that they were far in the rear, and in fact, in a few cases, actually working for the enemy.

At work in Manchester

AT the Reform Club, Manchester, on the evening of February 19th, more than 150 people took part in a function that was the culmination of five days' meetings arranged by the Manchester Council of Christians and Jews. The Dean of Manchester, the Rt. Rev. J. L. Wilson, presided at the Reform Club dinner, and guests of honour were the Rt. Hon. Lord Pakenham, Minister of Civil Aviation; Dr. J. J. Mallon, Warden of Toynbee Hall; and Mr. Neville Laski, K.C.

In his address, Lord Pakenham said that the Council of Christians and Jews, as he saw it, had three objects—the defeat of antisemitism wherever it appeared, the combating of religious persecution and intolerance in any form, and the sustaining, developing and expanding of common moral values based upon religious faith.

"What are the values," Lord Pakenham asked, "that Jews and Christians hold in common? They stand for the supremacy of the moral law." To say that was not to be platitudeous in an age where materialism was a dominant creed. Without a religious basis no moral law possessed an effective sanction. For particular individuals it might be possible to establish a set of moral values upon an agnostic or atheist position, but ultimately such values must decay. That road led nowhere, save to madness. "Without a religious basis the moral law would wither and die. Jews and Christians have that moral basis, and this community itself ought to suffice for their good companionship."

Messages of greeting were received from the Lord Mayor of Manchester, the Bishop of Manchester, and the Bishop of Salford. The Communal Rabbi, Dr. Altmann, and the Moderator of the Manchester Free Church Federal Council, Professor Manson, were among the widely representative and distinguished guests.

Other meetings

The series of meetings in Manchester—the second of the "week-end campaigns" arranged by the Council of Christians and Jews in different centres—had been announced in advance in the press and on the Northern Regional programme of the B.B.C. Other highlights of the campaign were the Friday evening service at Park Place Reform Synagogue, when the Rev. W. W. Simpson gave an address on "Why I joined the Council" and the large congregation included several Christian clergy present by invitation; and a Trio Team discussion at the Manchester Country Club, when a Roman Catholic, a Free Churchman, and a Jew led an informal discussion on "Can Christians and Jews co-operate?"

The remaining meetings were more in the nature of "working parties"—discussions with groups of clergy, Sunday school teachers, day school teachers, social workers, members of University student societies, representatives from different "18 Plus" groups, members of the legal profession, and members and workers in the Manchester branch of the Council of Christians and Jews.

At these various meetings there were full and frank discussions on the degree of prejudice and misunderstanding that exists between members of different groups in Manchester, and practical suggestions were considered for bringing about an improvement in the situation.

Picture of the Manchester situation

The impression gained from all these meetings and discussions is mixed. On the one hand, it is evident that in general where Christians and Jews come into friendly personal contact or are working together in community service, relations between them are good. One could not but be impressed by the frequent and sincere stories of neighbourly acts and kindnesses exchanged.

On the other hand, it is equally clear that there is a good deal of rather vague prejudice, manifested more often by implication than by direct hostility in word or deed; usually unacknowledged, and in fact not recognised as prejudice by the non-Jewish majority, but seen and felt more sharply by the Jewish minority against whom it is most frequently directed.

It was apparent too, that all too frequently both Christians and Jews have very little knowledge or understanding of each other, and have so little or so casual contact with each other that misunderstandings, instead of being corrected by personal experience, are rather magnified and exaggerated.

The general picture is perhaps well reflected in the words of a headmaster, who said that usually Christian and Jewish boys in his school get on very well together, but that, whereas when a Christian boy acts in an anti-social way he is regarded by his fellows as a rotten sort of boy, when a Jewish boy does so, it is not thought to be because he is that kind of boy, but because he is "typically Jewish."

Effects of the campaign

Many of those whom we consulted already see the situation very clearly, and are alive to its dangers and anxious to do all they can to remedy it. Our discussions with them open up new possibilities of action and new channels of influence. In addition, the various meetings, and

the publicity which they received, have brought much new interest and support for the Manchester Council of Christians and Jews. Not least, the campaign has enabled our Manchester members and helpers to see new possibilities before them, and has stimulated them to new efforts in Our Common Cause.

Commentary

● Brotherhood in Germany

When so much of our thinking and talking about Germany relates to rearmament, release of war criminals or growing antisemitism, it is refreshing to hear of Germans who are concerned about still more fundamental issues. We were therefore delighted to receive the text of an address delivered by Pastor Heinz Kloppenberg of Oldenburg at the opening of a Brotherhood Week celebration recently organised by the Bremen Council of Christians and Jews.

Speaking of a concept of human fellowship broad—and deep—enough to include even the adversary within our sense of responsibility, he emphasised that there can be no real reorientation of human relationships, whether between religious confessions or nations, until the concepts of guilt and forgiveness are taken into account. True human fellowship is unattainable unless guilt is confessed, atonement made and forgiveness granted. Repentance is therefore a matter of fundamental importance, and the question of the reconciliation of Jews and Germans a matter of concern to all Germans. There can be no lasting solution to any political or economic problem apart from this basic and all-embracing human fellowship.

Platitudes? Surely not except for the cynic for whom all expressions of truth are merely platitudinous! Heinz Kloppenberg has many friends in this country who know him to be a man who says what he believes and acts in accordance with his beliefs. Nor is he alone in holding these views. That those who share them may be few does not detract from their significance. Anything we in this country can do to strengthen them in their witness to these truths must be all to the good.

● Our Spiritual Inheritance

How much easier it is to be "anti" than "pro," to destroy than to create. During the last war our immediate object was clear. It was to destroy fascism, nazism or, for that matter, any form of tyranny or totalitarianism. Unfortunately our long range objectives were not so clearly

conceived. We were fighting for democracy, for fundamental freedoms, for the safeguarding of human rights. But the means by which these ends were to be achieved were but vaguely defined, and though much has been said about these matters, much more remains to be done if still greater disasters are to be averted.

But what? We are warned that we must rearm against possible communist aggression; that we must be constantly on our guard against the possible infiltration of communist ideas. From the practical point of view this is all perfectly reasonable. And yet the gravest danger in which we stand today is surely that of allowing ourselves to be stampeded into a merely anti-communist attitude, as if communism itself were the ultimate evil. But communism, like nazism, is only a symptom of a deep-seated spiritual problem to which as Christians and Jews we claim to have an answer. It is the outcome of our common failure to accept the implications of our professed belief in the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man.

Happily there is evidence of growing recognition of the importance of this truth in both Jewish and Christian circles. Shortly after the war a joint committee of representatives of the Anglican, Free Church, Roman Catholic and Jewish communities was set up to promote consultation and co-operation in international affairs. A few weeks ago this committee convened a representative conference of religious leaders from all sections of the community to consider a statement on the Spiritual Inheritance of Europe. The conference was envisaged, not as an end in itself, but as a stage in a process. It produced no final answers, but provided ample evidence of a lively and widespread concern about positive religious responsibility of Christians and Jews in the contemporary situation.

Readers of *Common Ground* will remember that we have our own statement of the fundamental principles common to Christianity and Judaism in relation to social order, produced at the Oxford Conference of 1946. May we once more commend that statement to the serious attention of all our members. It deals with issues which we neglect at our peril.

About Ourselves

- Many readers of *Common Ground* would hear the broadcasts by the Council's General Secretary, Rev. W. W. Simpson, in the early morning series *Lift up your Hearts* during

Holy Week. In these six short talks Mr. Simpson set the events leading to the Crucifixion in their Jewish background.

Also during Holy Week, the Rev.

CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS NUMBER

A. C. F. Beales is a former Chairman of the Executive Committee of *The Sword of the Spirit*.

The Rev. Henry Carter, C.B.E., Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Council of Christians and Jews, is also Chairman of a number of peace and refugee organisations, including the World Council of Churches Standing Conference on Refugees.

The Rev. Derrick Cuthbert is the Director of Religious Education, South Africa, of the National Sunday School Association.

The Rev. Oswald Rhys Davies, M.A., B.D., is a Congregational Minister at New Bethel, Garnant, Carmarthen.

Father A. G. Hebert, S.S.M., is Tutor at Kelham Theological College, Kelham, Newark, Notts. He is author of a number of books.

Rabbi Dr. Ignaz Maybaum is Minister of the Edgware & District Reform Synagogue and the author of a number of books on Judaism.

A. I. Polack is Education Officer of the Council of Christians and Jews, and formerly Housemaster at Clifton College, Bristol.

The Very Rev. Glyn Simon is Dean of Llandaff.

Professor T. W. Manson gave a series of talks entitled *Steadfastly Towards Jerusalem*, in which he described the relations of Jesus with various different groups of his contemporaries, showing why the Crucifixion became inevitable. As Moderator of the Manchester Free Church Federal Council, Dr. Manson is one of the Presidents of the Manchester Council of Christians and Jews.

It is encouraging that the B.B.C. made these two series of talks prominent among the Holy Week religious broadcasts, and it is significant that they chose for the one series so distinguished and objective a scholar as Professor Manson, and that for the other they invited the General Secretary of the Council of Christians and Jews.

● Of Liverpool people John Wesley wrote in his Journal on April 14th, 1755, that they were "in general the most mild and courteous I ever saw in a seaport town, as indeed appears by their friendly behaviour not only to the Jews and the Papists who live among them but even to the Methodists (so called)."

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Although the city must by now be many times the size of what Mr. Wesley described as "one of the neatest, best-built towns" he had seen in England, it is good to feel that the tradition of "friendly behaviour" still survives. Nevertheless it has long been felt that there is a place in its life for a Council of Christians and Jews. A local Executive Committee, which was established a few years ago under the chairmanship of Mr. Bertram B. Benas, now has as its secretary an Anglican clergyman (the Rev. G. S. Robinson) who is keenly interested in the Council's work.

These two "enthusiasts" recently arranged a week-end programme of meetings and interviews for Mr. A. I. Polack and the General Secretary with groups of students and various individuals of influence and importance in the religious, cultural and social life of the city. Encouraged by the friendliness of the reception given and the obvious interest shown in our work it has been decided to go ahead with plans for a full scale week-end campaign to be held in Liverpool in November this year. We look forward with keen anticipation to what we have every reason to hope will prove to be a very important occasion.

In conclusion we should like to congratulate Mr. Benas on his recent election (for the second time in his distinguished career) to the Presidency of the Liverpool Literary and Philosophical Society with which members of his family have maintained an unbroken association of membership since the year 1866. Surely this must be a record!

● The meetings held in Manchester from February 15th-20th are reported elsewhere in this issue of *Common Ground*. In Leeds, a number of meetings and discussions will take place during the last week-end in April, culminating in a public meeting, over which the Lord Mayor of Leeds is to preside, on Monday April 30th.

BOOKS RECEIVED

We acknowledge with thanks the receipt of the following books. Reviews of books are held over until the next issue of "Common Ground."

The Jewish Mission. By Rabbi Ignaz Maybaum. James Clarke & Co., 10s. 6d.

The Methodist Heritage. By Rev. Henry Carter. Epworth Press, 15s. 0d.

Communism and Christian Faith. By Rev. H. Inglis James. Carey Kingsgate Press, 6s. 0d.

The Protecting Power. By Eugen Spier, Skeffington, 10s. 6d.

A History of the Jews. By Paul Goodman. (Revised and enlarged by Dr. Israel Cohen). Dent, 10s. 6d.

Jesus in His Own Words. Compiled by Harold Roper. Longmans, 12s. 6d.

Life in Palestine when Jesus Lived. By J. Estlin Carpenter. The Lindsey Press, 3s. 6d.



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